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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

March 17, 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Status of Possible OAS Action
on Cuba.

In response to your request for a status report on possible OAS action on Cuba, I would like to inform you that the Department, CIA, and USIA are engaged in an accelerated program to prepare Latin American public and governmental opinion to support the United States in possible OAS action under the Caracas anti-Communist Resolution and/or a number of other avenues open to us through the OAS. There is little prospect that the United States will be able to act with success through the OAS in the immediate future. One reason is that our own latest National Intelligence Estimate does not find Cuba to be under Communist control or domination, and we lack all of the hard evidence which would be required to convince skeptical Latin American Governments and the public opinion behind them.

Before OAS action is decided upon, we should assure (a) that a Cuban opposition leadership capable of taking advantage of the pressure the OAS would place on Castro is in a position to act, and (b) that our efforts to enlist Latin American support will not generate excessive pressures on us to undertake a significantly expanded and more dramatic economic assistance program for Latin America to counter Castro's appeal. Moreover, it is probable, if not certain, that the Castro Government will attempt to forestall or counter any U.S.-stimulated action in the OAS by placing its case against the U. S. before the UN, and we would have to be prepared to deal with this contingency. There is enclosed a further statement on the status of possible OAS action on Cuba.

Christian L. Herter
Christian A. Herter

Enclosure:

Statement on Possible
OAS Action on Cuba.

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Authority	MR94-398-1
By	EKS
	NLE Date 3/23/75
	3/31/75 (2015/77)



Status of Possible OAS Action on Cuba

1. The Department is actually laying the groundwork for possible future OAS action on Cuba, although the question of whether and when such action should be taken will depend on (a) obtaining an indication that the rest of Latin America shares the U. S. view that Cuba is a hemispheric problem and is prepared to support the U.S. rather than attempt to pressure both the U. S. and the Castro Government to accept a temporary compromise which would not meet our minimum requirements and (b) making sure that any OAS action which we stimulate will help rather than hamstring domestic opposition to Castro, since we must ultimately depend on Cuban opposition to Castro if we are not to intervene.

2. Thus far, attention has been focused within the Government, in Congress, and in public discussions principally on the Caracas Resolution which calls for a consultative meeting of Foreign Ministers to decide on appropriate action under existing treaties in the event of the "domination or control of the political institutions of any American State by the International Communist movement"--as a means of dealing with the Cuban situation. It should be borne in mind, however, that the inter-American system offers other avenues to consideration of the Cuban situation and that these could also be employed. For example, Article 6 of the Rio Treaty, the provision under which Caracas Resolution 93 is most applicable, is actually broader than the resolution in that it calls for consultation regarding any "fact or situation" affecting the security of an American State and hemispheric peace. Furthermore, Article 39 of the Charter of the OAS authorizes meetings of Foreign Ministers regarding any problem "of an urgent nature and of common interest" to member states. These provisions could bring into play the consultative procedure even though a case for Communist "domination or control" could not be made convincingly to the required majority of the OAS members. Another approach is offered by the Inter-American Peace Committee which, under a directive from the Santiago Foreign Ministers' meeting of last August, is even now concerning itself with the factors creating tension in the

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Caribbean area, and which provides both a forum for letting our views be known to the others and a possible approach to further international action. Which of these approaches could be used with the most likelihood of gaining support is to be determined as Latin American opinion on the Cuban situation crystallizes and our consultations with Latin American Governments proceed.

3. Successful OAS action on Cuba depends on obtaining the votes of two-thirds or more of the other Latin American Governments, and this in turn depends on there existing a climate of opinion in Latin America toward Castro which would enable friendly and responsible Latin American Governments to vote with us. The first stage of action looking to possible OAS action is, thus, preparing public opinion. The development of this opinion depends upon our having and getting across to the Latin American Governments and peoples convincing factual evidence to demonstrate that Cuba is at least dangerously infiltrated with International Communist influences and that, in addition, the action and attitudes of the Castro Government, particularly in the economic and security fields, are contrary to the interests of the other American Governments and peoples.

Beginning in 1958 before the Castro Government came to power, the Department established a special unpublicized Task Force which has coordinated an increasingly intense State-CIA-USIA effort to get into the press and other information media--principally without attribution to the U. S. Government--facts and interpretations which would awaken public opinion to Communist influences in Cuba, to Castro's intervention in the affairs of other American Republics by promoting and assisting Castro-oriented subversive and revolutionary activities, and to the dictatorial character of the Castro Government. This work has made an important contribution to the disenchantment of many Latins with Castro. The second phase of preparation for possible OAS action has been diplomatic. Our diplomatic relations with Cuba have been guided in large measure by the principle that insofar as possible it should be made clear to Latin American Governments (and public opinion by Presidential statements and publication of our notes) that Castro bears the responsibility for the situation: after a period of almost complete restraint, we have adopted a practice of defending our reputation and rights with vigor but fairness in public and private

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communications with Castro's Government and this has tended to win us the support essential to any OAS action. Starting as early as the Buenos Aires Economic Conference in May, 1959, and continuing through your recent trip to Latin America, we have discussed the Cuban situation and various aspects of it with a substantial number of Latin American Governments and obtained a large measure of approval for our policies, although it is clear that few Latin American Governments are yet prepared to participate in any OAS action which would appear to condemn Castro.

4. The Department is now in the process of further stepping up both the anti-Castro publicity effort and its diplomatic interchanges on Cuba with the other American Governments. Both political and security problems will have to be solved before we determine how much more information, particularly in written form, can be supplied to other Governments without provoking premature damaging charges that the United States seeks to destroy Castro's revolution and without compromising our intelligence sources. It should be possible, however, in a short time to do significantly more along these lines than in the past.

5. An important bottleneck to suggesting early OAS action under the Caracas Resolution is that our own intelligence estimates do not substantiate that the Castro Government is under the "control and domination" of International Communism and still less do we have available conclusive evidence which would convince Latin Americans disinclined to believe that this is the case. The latest National Intelligence Estimate dated December 29, 1959, which covers 1960 finds that, though Communist influence will certainly continue to grow; "we do not believe that during this period the Communists will be able to force Fidel Castro to adopt policies to which he is opposed." The Department has urgently requested a new Estimate, scheduled for March 22, as well as new and fuller compilation of the intelligence available and obtainable on Communist influence.

6. Moreover, it is probable, if not certain, that the Castro Government will attempt to forestall or counter any U.S.-stimulated action in the OAS by placing its case against the U. S. before the UN, and we would have to be prepared to deal with this contingency. It

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is also to be considered that any "enforcement" measures agreed to by the OAS would be raised before the Security Council since Article 53 of the Charter requires such measures to be authorized by the Security Council. To prepare the ground for this eventuality, information on the Cuban situation is being disseminated through the NATO Council and on specific matters, to certain NATO and other friendly governments while an unattributed information effort is being undertaken in other free world nations to clarify thinking in our favor on the Cuban situation. Special studies to assist Ambassador Lodge are being prepared.

7. An important consideration in any possible OAS action on Cuba is the probability that a significant number of Latin American Governments would condition their support of the United States on the willingness of the U. S. to undertake a more substantial and more dramatic program to assist in the financing of Latin American development. This would represent in part the standard practice of many Latin American Governments to try to pressure the United States to meet their aspirations, but it should not be overlooked that many Latin American leaders genuinely believe that the only effective counter to the appeal that Castroism, if not Communism, holds for the underprivileged and intellectuals within their countries is a more dramatic, U.S.-backed, democratic development program. In specific cases, such as conversations about Cuba with Brazil and Ecuador, it has already become clear that the enlistment of Latin American support on Cuba will in fact be tied to greater U. S. economic assistance.

8. In sum, the Department cannot offer hope that OAS action will be practicable in the immediate future although the preparatory measures are being undertaken in an ever-accelerating fashion. Moreover, when and if effective OAS action is in our reach, it must be carefully coordinated with the development of a Cuban opposition to Castro able to take advantage of it.



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